**Mentor Guidelines**

Goals: To identify a mentor that will nurture you and your project during your CAS experience.

Objectives:

* To define what a mentor is to you.
* To understand different ways to find a mentor.
* To identify what you want in a mentor.
* To set up clear expectations for your meetings with your mentor.

Skills:

* Learning how to network in our community to find your mentor.
* Understanding the mentor/mentee relationship and how to get the most out of that relationship.
* Creating questions that will be useful to both your mentor and yourself to forward your project.

The Webster’s Dictionary defines a mentor as a trusted counselor or guide. This should not be your parents or your family member. A mentor is someone that will guide you during your project, they will keep you on track, give you feedback and keep you motivated to continue. They will do this because they enjoy giving back to the community and they are interested in your project and your success, not because they will get any monetary gain for the experience.

How will you find a mentor? First, you will need to define your project. Next, you will need to define what you would like to see in a mentor. Finally, you will need to research your project and understand what you will need from an adult in the community.

What do you want from a mentor?

* Do they have knowledge of your subject matter?
* Do they have time to help you with your project?
* Do they have the desire to help with your project?
* Will you need occasional or more frequent contact with them?
* Do they need to be someone here in Costa Rica or can you have a mentor that is remote?
* What else is important to you about your mentor?

Your mentor might be someone you already know. Get to know the adults in your life by asking open ended questions. If you do think that they would be a good mentor, make sure that you tell them why you would like to work with them. Explain to them what their strengths are and why you look up to them.

Use your networking skills. Ask your parents about their friends and if they know of someone that would be interested in your project. Ask your teachers, ask your friends, ask on facebook if there is someone that not only fits the needs of your project, but also fits your description of a mentor. Sometimes you don’t even realize that you are networking. It is all about relationships. Many times life is about “Who you know.” So when you are presented with the opportunity to get to know someone, even out of your normal social circle, that relationship can bring value to your life in different ways. When you are looking for a job, or looking for help with your project, or looking for a reference for college. This makes it sound like we only have relationships to ask for favors, but it goes both ways. The goal of networking should be to meet interesting people, learn from them and maybe make a new friend.

When networking, ask more questions than you answer. People that are good at networking are great at asking the right questions and letting the other person do the talking.

**What You Should Expect from your Mentor**

* **Recongnition**-they should help you identify skills and talents that you might not even know you have!
* **Encouragement**-they should continue to cheer you on and believe in you.
* **Facilitation-**they will give advice and techniques to help your succeed.
* **Stretching**-they will push you to go further.

**Mentor Meeting Checklist**

Before your first meeting with your mentor:

* Set up meeting with your mentor either by phone or through email.
* Research your project thoroughly and understand what your mentor can help you with in regards to completing the goals that you have set for yourself.
* Prepare at least 5 open ended questions that you can ask your mentor during your meeting.
* Be prepared to talk about your expectations of them.

On the day of your meeting:

* Dress appropriately.
* Be on time.
* Spit out your gum.
* Come prepared with notebook, pen, any information that you would like to share with your mentor, and your questions.
* Remember that you are managing this meeting. That means that you are responsible for the agenda. You will need to have concrete examples of the progress that you have completed and the questions that you have for your mentor. Be ready to accept feedback in a positive manner.
* Make sure to thank your mentor.